

EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
The City of Pendleton has lost the use of two of their city wells and are asking residents to cut back on their outside water usage.

PENDLETON

Two wells fail in one week

Residents asked to cut back on watering

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pendleton's two largest water supply wells are out of service, and in response the city is asking residents to cut back on outside watering.

The well at Stillman Park went down last week, said Bob Patterson, the city's

public works director, and Monday around 4 a.m. the city lost the Roy Raley Park well. The two wells supply about 4.6 million gallons of water per day.

Patterson said having two large wells go down at the same time is a first for him.

He said rubber bushings went bad on the Stillman well and caused the pump to seize up. The well provides about two million gallons a day. Parts are on the way, he said, and crews should make repairs Wednesday with the goal of having the pump back running again by Saturday.

The Roy Raley Park well provides

about 2.6 million gallons per day, he said, and started slowing down before it conked out. Patterson said crews on Wednesday plan on finding the problem with the pump.

"We won't know everything until we pull that out," Patterson said.

And with the pump 400 feet down, he said, getting to it means hauling up that much column pipe.

City parks director Donnie Cook said his department shut off water at all

See WATER/8A

Wildfire season flares up

Several large blazes erupt in Eastern Oregon

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

Wildland firefighters in northeast Oregon faced their first big test of the 2017 fire season over the weekend after three large blazes erupted in relatively short order, at least two of which were human-caused.

The largest of the bunch, the Bear Butte fire, was first reported Friday afternoon within a mile of Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Authorities quickly evacuated the resort, along with Anthony Lakes Campground and cabins in the immediate area.

As of Monday, the fire was holding steady at about 500 acres. Road closures are in effect while crews work to strengthen fire lines, including Forest Service Road 73 from the North Fork John Day Campground to the national forest boundary. The Elkhorn Crest Trail is also closed from the trailhead to the Summit Trail junction.

On Sunday, a Type 2 incident management team composed of 300 mostly local firefighters and three helicopters arrived to take command of the Bear Butte fire, which is now 10 percent contained. The cause of the fire has not yet been determined.

Elsewhere, people have been determined the cause of the 222-acre Indian Lake fire started Friday in Umatilla County, and the 301-acre Clarks Creek fire which

See FIRE/8A

HERMISTON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Echo FFA members junior Bobbie Sharp, top left, gets a hand from junior Kaylee Murstig, second from bottom left, and junior Lexie Cox, top right, while decorating their goat pens on Monday at the Umatilla County Fair in Hermiston.

Center of attention

Community rallies, cuts ribbon on new fairgrounds

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

About 100 people crowded into the foyer at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Events Center main building Monday evening, hours from the start of the facility's biggest event to date.

On the eve of the 105th Umatilla County Fair, backers of EOTEC and community members cut the ribbon on the facility and cheered the efforts it's taken to get to this point.

It was a culmination of many years of planning and work, and many let out a sigh of relief that the roughly \$16 million project was finally coming to fruition.

"If you're like me, you were nervous up until today," said Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann. "There was a lot of anxiety and nervousness that things wouldn't get done. But I'm excited and proud to be here."

Drotzmann, along with City Manager Byron Smith and Umatilla County Commissioner Larry Givens, both members of the EOTEC board, talked about the work it's taken to get the facility up and running.

"In 2012, we had just signed away the Umatilla County Fairgrounds," Givens said. "I was more than scared. I thought, was this an absolute disaster? But people have pitched in. I went down to the old fairgrounds last Saturday, and



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Former Hermiston city manager Tom Harper, center, looks at the signatures on a ribbon used in a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center as current city manager Byron Smith, at right, looks on Monday in Hermiston. Harper was the city manager when the City of Hermiston originally bought the EOTEC property.

More inside

Transformer joins tractors, more at Umatilla County Fair parade
Page 3A

thought, how did we manage to survive in that spot?"

Smith said it was exciting to see the place finally fill up with vendors.

"There have been lots of bumps," Smith said. "But nothing

we couldn't overcome."

Drotzmann acknowledged the many people, and groups, that have contributed money or time to EOTEC's progress. Along with the many people who have been working on the project in the past few years, he acknowledged those who had the vision for it in the first place. One of those people, Hermiston's first city manager Tom Harper, was present at the gathering.

Givens noted that the work was

"This is just the beginning. We'll be here, and we'll continue to grow."

— Larry Givens,
Umatilla County Commissioner

not finished.

"This is just the beginning," he said. "We'll be here, and we'll continue to grow."

After the ribbon cutting, community members stuck around to tour the new facility, both indoors and out. People were busy setting up vendor booths, rides and the rodeo arena, and students were milling about the animal barns, preparing to show their livestock. Inside, displays of food, produce and handwork were already set up.

Visitors were eager to explore the new facility.

Steve Williams, a Umatilla County resident since 1984, said he comes to the fair and rodeo every year.

"It's a great addition," he said, adding that he's looking forward to the rodeo most — especially the bull riding.

Fair participants seemed pleased with the new digs, too. Taylor Betz, a 19-year-old showing open-class

See FAIR/8A

